



The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT

**THE PROMISE OF
ADOLESCENCE**

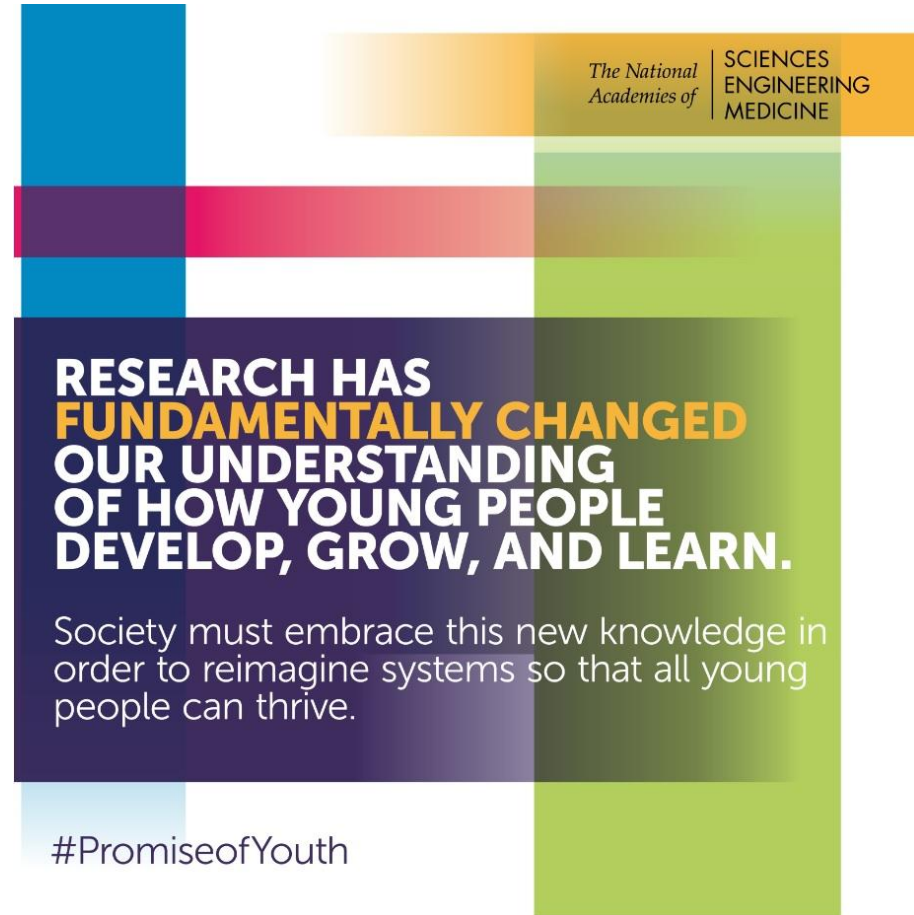
Realizing Opportunity
for All Youth

The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth

National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine
(2019)

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development
June 2020 Meeting

- Examines the neurobiological and socio-behavioral science of adolescent development, and
- Explores **how this knowledge can be applied to institutions and systems** so that adolescent well-being, resilience, and development are promoted and systems address structural barriers and inequalities in opportunity and access
 - Educational System
 - Health System
 - Child Welfare System
 - Justice System





Adolescent brains are **uniquely fit** to prepare young people to meet new life challenges.

#PromiseofYouth

The National
Academies of

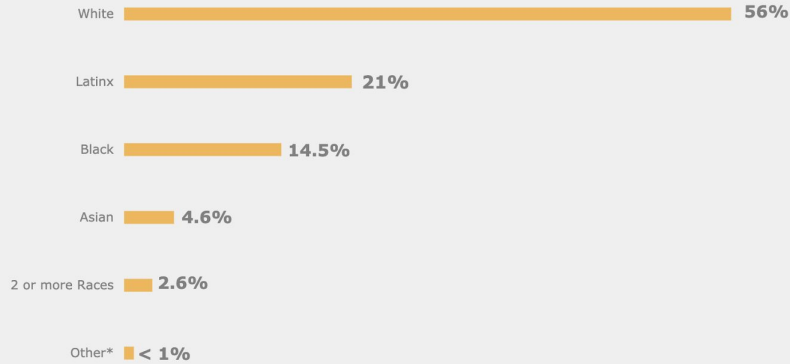
SCIENCES
ENGINEERING
MEDICINE

Defining Adolescence

- Period of development change in a person's life bridging childhood and adulthood
- Begins with onset of puberty and ends during mid-20s
- Encompasses 4 periods
 - Early Adolescence (10-12)
 - Middle Adolescence (13-15)
 - Late Adolescence (16-18)
 - Young Adulthood (19-25)

2010

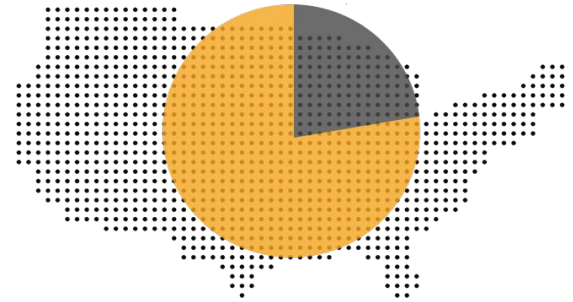
10-24-year-olds in 2010 U.S. Census



* American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

2017

There were approximately 73.5 million adolescents ages 10 to 25 in 2017, representing 22.6 percent of the U.S. population.

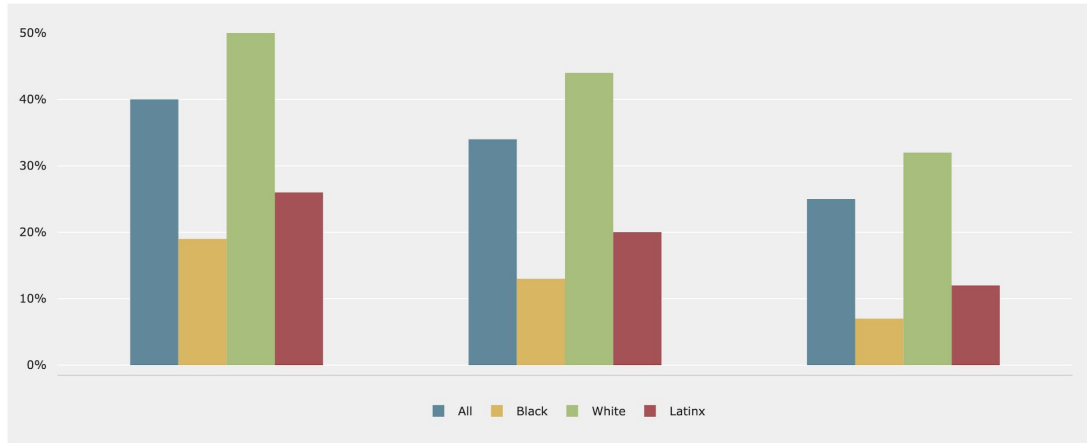


2020

The adolescent population is expected to become majority-minority by 2020.

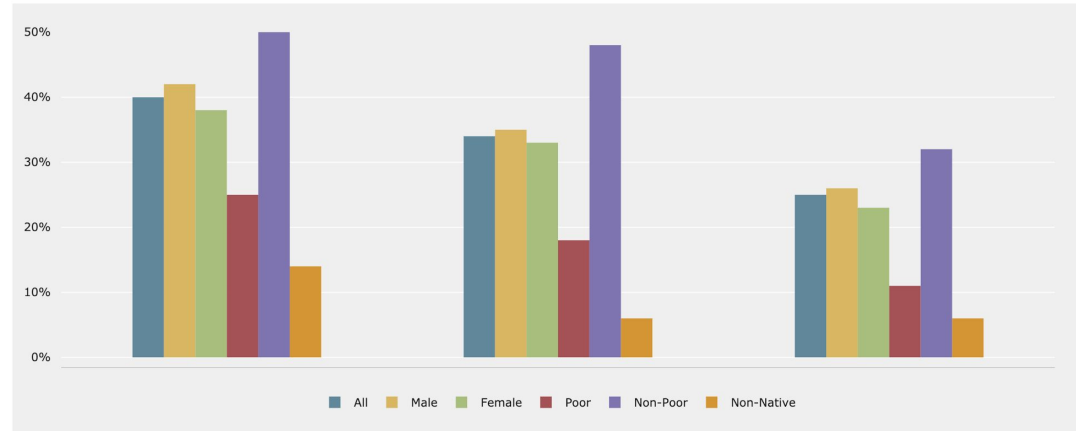


Percentage of Students Proficient in Math, by Race/Ethnicity, 2017



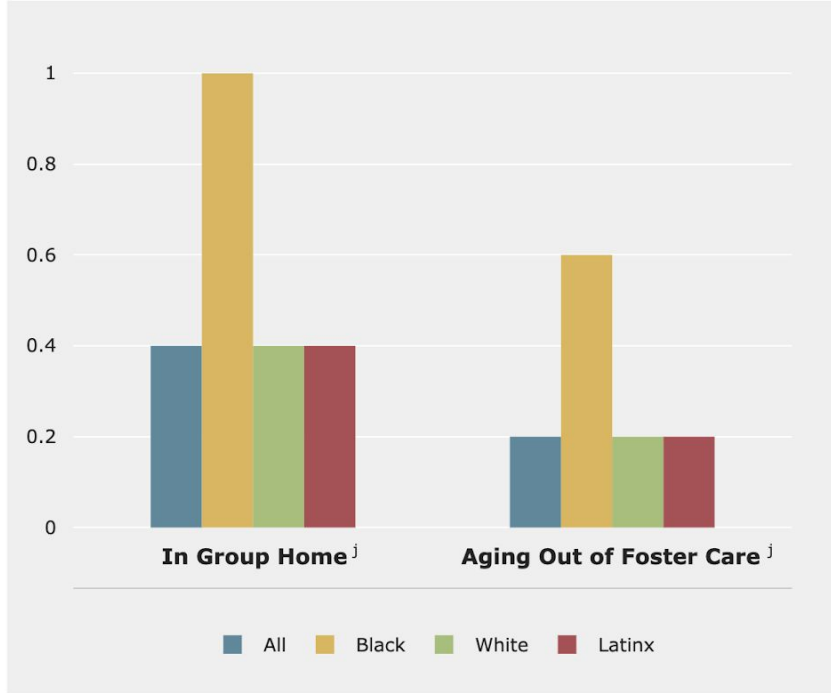
Source: Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics

Percentage of Students Proficient in Math, by Gender Identity, Income, and Nativity, 2017



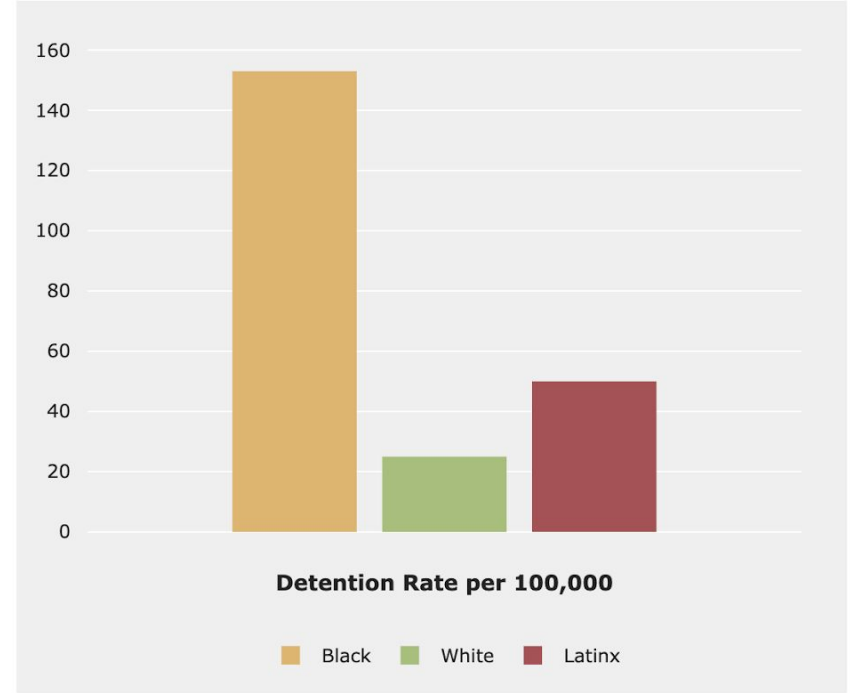
Source: Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics

Share of Youth In Group Homes and Aging out of Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity, 2016



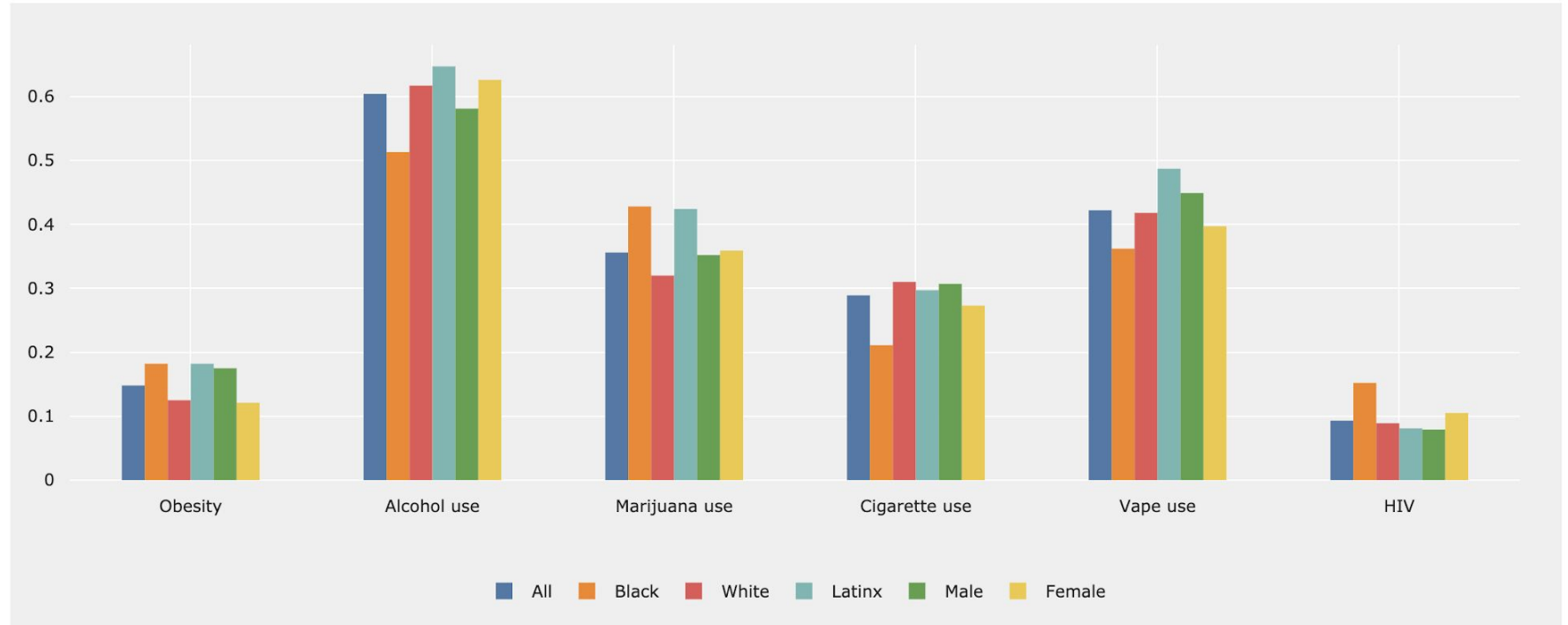
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

Juvenile Detention rate per 1,000, 2015



Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Measures of Adolescent Health, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity, 2017



Source: Data from National Center for Health Statistics

1 Adolescence is a time for development and learning and provides opportunities for life-long impact.

2 During adolescence, young people learn how to make decisions and take responsibility for shaping one's life.

3 Forming personal identity and a sense of self is a hallmark of adolescence.

4 Supportive relationships with adults (such as teachers, parents, and mentors) are critical for fostering positive outcomes for adolescents.

5 The adolescent brain has an exceptional capacity for resilience, meaning adolescents have the opportunity to develop neurobiological adaptations and behaviors that leave them better equipped to handle adversities.

6 Disparities in family and neighborhood resources and supports, biased and discriminatory interactions with important social systems, and resulting inequalities in opportunity and access severely curtail the promise of adolescence for many youth.

Blueprint for a Developmentally-Informed Secondary Education System for Adolescents

Recommendation 6-1: Rectify disparities in resources for least-advantaged schools and students.



Recommendation 6-2: Design purposeful but flexible pathways through education.



Recommendation 6-3: Teach practical knowledge and nonacademic skills, such as decision making, adaptability, and social-emotional competence.



Recommendation 6-4: Protect the overall health and well-being of each student.



Recommendation 6-5: Foster culturally sensitive learning environments.



Recommendation 6-6: Help adolescents and families navigate the education sector.



Blueprint for Creating an Adolescent-Friendly Health System

Recommendation 7-1: Strengthen the financing of health care services for adolescents, including insurance coverage for uninsured or under-insured populations.



Recommendation 7-2: Improve access to comprehensive, integrated, coordinated health services for adolescents.



Recommendation 7-3: Increase access to behavioral health care and treatment services.



Recommendation 7-4: Improve the training and distribution and increase the number of adolescent health care providers.



Recommendation 7-5: Improve federal and state data collection on adolescent health and well-being, and conduct adolescent-specific health services research and disseminate the findings.



Blueprint for a Developmentally-Informed Child Welfare System for Adolescents

Recommendation 8-1: Reduce racial and ethnic disparities in child welfare system involvement.



Recommendation 8-2: Promote broad uptake by the states of federal programs that promote resilience and positive outcomes for adolescents involved in the child welfare system.



Recommendation 8-3: Provide services to adolescents and their families in the child welfare system that are developmentally informed at the individual, program, and system levels.



Recommendation 8-4: Conduct research that reflects all types and ages of adolescents in the child welfare system. Improve the training and distribution and increase the number of adolescent health care providers.



Recommendation 8-5: Foster greater collaboration between the child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and health systems.



Blueprint for a Developmentally Appropriate Justice System

Recommendation 9-1: Reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability status, and sexual orientation or gender identity and expression among adolescents involved in the justice system.



Recommendation 9-2: Ensure that youth maintain supportive relationships while involved in the justice system and receive appropriate guidance and counsel from legal professionals and caregivers.



Recommendation 9-3: Implement policies that aim to reduce harm to justice-involved youth in accordance with knowledge from developmental science.



Recommendation 9-4: Implement developmentally appropriate and fair policies and practices for adolescents involved in the criminal justice system.



Recommendation 9-5: For those youth in the custody of the justice system, ensure that policies and practices are implemented to prioritize the health and educational needs of adolescents and avoid causing harm.



Youth Engagement Is Necessary

“Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels, but old men are guilty if they forget what it is to be young.” - JK Rowling

Relative to young children, adolescents have **advanced decision-making skills** and can better seek solutions that are **right for them.**

#PromiseofYouth

The National
Academies of

SCIENCES
ENGINEERING
MEDICINE



Conclusion

It's time to **reimagine and redesign the systems** and settings that adolescents most frequently encounter.

Together, we can ensure that millions of young people can impact society for the better.

#PromiseofYouth

